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THE YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK ✓

SYNOPSIS OF FILM

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|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Bridal Veil Fall. | 11 Falls of the Yosemite. |
| 2. Cathedral Rocks. | 12. Three Brothers. |
| 3. Cathedral Spires. | 13. El Capitan. |
| 4. Sentinel Rock. | 14. El Capitan Bridge and Moraine. |
| 5. Glacier Point. | 15. Ribbon Fall. |
| 6. Sentinel Dome. | |
| 7. Half Dome. | |
| 8. Washington Column. | |
| 9. Royal Arches. | |
| 10. Yosemite Village. | |

THE YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

THE Sierra Nevada Mountains, one of the greatest ranges in the western United States, extend north and south through California near the boundary of Nevada. The range is more than three hundred miles long and eighty miles wide, forming a high wall which separates the Valley of California on the west from the great desert on the east. The eastern face, several thousand feet high, is sharp and abrupt while on the west the highland slopes gently down to the California Valley.

The crest of this great tilted block of the earth's crust is from ten thousand to fourteen thousand feet high. Among its famous peaks is Mount Whitney, 14,500 feet, the highest summit in the United States.

Down the western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains many short, turbulent rivers flow into the California Valley. Because of their swift currents and their cutting tools of soil brought from the mountains, these streams have cut deep gorges and canyons and have deposited their loads of silt in the Valley of California, filling it to the depth of several thousand feet.

Two of the most noted river systems on the western slope of the Sierra Nevadas are those of the Merced and Tuolumne. In no other part of the region are there such deep, narrow canyons, such hanging valleys, such threatening cliffs, such lofty precipices, such gigantic rocks, and such wonderful falls as in the region drained by these two rivers. So wonderful is the scenery and so marvelous the work of the streams and of the glaciers which once covered the region, that in 1906 Congress set apart an area of more

than 1,100 square miles, larger than the state of Rhode Island, to be known as the Yosemite National Park. This park is situated on the western slope of the Sierras in middle-eastern California.

The park receives its name from Yosemite Creek, a small stream which flows into the Merced River from the north. Most people know little of the park except the region in the vicinity of the Yosemite Valley. This valley is only a small part of the great playground, "a mere crack in its granite mountains." Besides the wonders near Yosemite Creek, there are in other parts of the park, lakes, waterfalls, deep woods, ice-sculptured canyons, snowy mountains from ten to fourteen thousand feet high, trout-filled streams, hidden glaciers and forest giants that were waving their green tops over the rushing streams long before Christ was born in Bethlehem. In California these big trees—Sequoias, if we call them by their right name, form several distinct groves three of which are in the Yosemite National Park. The greatest number of trees and the biggest also, grow in the Sequoia National Park and the Grant National Park, both of which are situated on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The sequoia is a true conifer. The largest are about 300 feet high and 30 feet in diameter. The lower branches drop off as the tree grows older until only a few are left. These branches, however, are bigger than the trunks of other trees. The bark is from one to two feet thick. It takes about fifteen hundred (1,500) years for these trees to mature and how long they live we cannot say. Fallen trees with perfect wood have been seen with rings denoting over 4,000 years of life. The "General Sherman" in Sequoia Park is still standing, the oldest, largest, living thing in the world.

The Merced River and its tributaries drain the southern part of the Yosemite National Park, and the Tuolumne System the northern part. Similar wonders exist in both

valleys but those in the vicinity of the Merced are on a grander scale. Through long ages the Merced River has cut for itself a deep, tortuous canyon. Because of its volume of water and its quantity of sediment, the river erodes more than its branches—the Yosemite, Cascade, Bridal Veil and other creeks. As a result these tributary creeks remain at a higher level, and falls mark their junction with the main stream. The great glacier which once passed over the northern part of the United States, covered this region. This slowly moving mass of ice, hundreds and even thousands of feet in depth, cleaned, deepened and widened the river beds and still farther accentuated the difference in height between the valley of the main stream and those of its branches. The falls of these tributary streams are among the greatest wonders of the region. Nowhere else in the world is there such a water spectacle. The upper fall of the Yosemite drops 1,430 feet, a distance equal to nine Niagaras. The lower fall is more than 300 hundred feet in height.

In addition to the entrancing spectacle of brilliant falls on every hand, majestic cliffs tower in air, fretted, planed and polished by the action of the streams, the glaciers, the frost, the rain, the sunshine.

Entering the valley from the extreme westerly road, called the Big Oak Flat Road, the sound of many waters greets the ear, and bold El Capitan stands before us as a giant in the midst.

But we pass on to see the sunlight gilding Sentinel Rock, as it lifts its Gothic spire on the east just opposite to Washington Column on the left. We have already passed Cathedral Spires, whose worshipful testimony to the handiwork of Omnipotence has waited centuries for the appreciation of man. But, while we cannot name all the changes in objective fascination, for each seems to eclipse the last, the eye notes the Half-Dome whose reflective smoothness suggests

the mighty strength of a Vulcan as his crowning masterpiece. The last object to break the line of vision before catching the serrated line of mountains, marking the eastern horizon, is the peak toward whose top climbing clouds seem to aspire as they rise and fall with passing currents. That this is called Cloud Rest suggests the object as it stands before the eye of the traveler. We are reluctant to leave this charmed valley—and as a last reflection, can but recall the words of our own Emerson, who declared that as a natural wonder, this region fully “comes up to the brag.”

QUESTIONS, TOPICS, SUGGESTIONS

1. Tell the class about John Muir and the part he took in securing National Parks and Monuments.
2. What is a moraine? How formed? How named? Why?
3. What parts of North America were covered by ice in the Glacial Period?
4. Why does snow remain on the tops of high mountains throughout the year?
5. Locate the National Parks of the United States. Tell for what each is noted.
6. Where are the largest trees in the world? How high do they grow? How old are they? How are their ages determined?
7. Locate and describe the Falls of the Yosemite?
8. What striking rock formations are to be seen in the valley? How are they formed? Describe the difference in the formations?

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